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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the twenty-eighth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of Council resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of Council resolution 2191 (2014) and paragraph 5 of Council resolution 2258 (2015), in which the Council requested me to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on the data available to United Nations agencies on the ground, from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, other Syrian sources and open sources. Data from United Nations agencies on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 31 May 2016. More recent data have been included when available.

II. Major developments

A. Developments on the ground

3. During the reporting period, the cessation of hostilities faced its most significant threat since it entered into force on 27 February. On 24 May, 39 non-State armed opposition groups issued a statement in which they threatened to withdraw from the cessation of hostilities within 48 hours, although they remained silent after the ultimatum expired. Efforts by the International Syria Support Group and the United Nations to reduce the violence continued. On 5 May, the United States of America and the Russian Federation brokered a 48-hour "regime of silence", which was established in Aleppo. On 24 May, a 72-hour "regime of silence" was launched to cover Darayya and eastern Ghutah, Rif Dimashq governorate.

4. In line with resolution 2258 (2015), the following description of developments on the ground reports on the compliance by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic with resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). This information is without prejudice to the work of the International Syria Support Group Task Force on the Ceasefire.

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5. Fighting continued during the reporting period, especially in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Homs, Ladhiqiyah and Rif Dimashq governorates. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that the number of violations and abuses of international human rights law, violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights documented during the reporting period rose significantly in certain areas, such as Aleppo and Rif Dimashq, compared with previous months.

6. In a note verbale to OHCHR dated 6 June, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic informed the Office that, in May, more than 270 persons had allegedly been killed and more than 653 injured as a result of "terrorist" attacks. It provided a detailed list of casualties in the governorates of Aleppo, Damascus, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Hasakah, Homs, Idlib, Ladhiqiyah, Rif Dimashq and Tartus. While some incidents, such as those in Ladhiqiyah and Tartus, probably corresponded to those recorded by OHCHR, the Office was unable to independently verify those allegations.

7. Open sources, including monitoring groups, reported a higher death toll in May as a result of actions by all parties to the conflict. The United Nations was not able to independently verify those allegations, however.

8. In Rif Dimashq governorate, heavy fighting continued in several areas. Government forces assumed control over the entire southern sector of eastern Ghutah, including full control over the hitherto-besieged area of Zabdin, and made further gains in the eastern sector towards Nashabiyah during May. The fighting resulted in civilian casualties and led to the displacement of several thousand civilians to the central and northern sectors of eastern Ghutah, predominantly to Kafr Batna, and Misraba. OHCHR documented attacks by pro-government forces and non-State armed opposition groups, as well as between non-State armed opposition groups, that resulted in civilian casualties. Air strikes and shelling were reported in several towns, including Duma, Shawfuniyah, Dayr al-Asafir, Marjah and Buzaynah.

9. In western Ghutah, government forces reportedly conducted an offensive on the besieged town of Darayya. Reports of shelling by non-State armed opposition groups in Darayya were also recorded. On 12 May, shortly after a convoy of the United Nations, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross was denied entry to Darayya by the government authorities, pro-government forces reportedly fired shells on to the town, killing two people. Furthermore, OHCHR received reports indicating that at least six civilians had been killed and several others injured in the fighting in and around Darayya during the second half of May.

10. Heavy fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups was reported in the Khan al-Shih area of Rif Dimashq, resulting in multiple deaths and injuries to civilians. On 17 May, shells struck a civilian minibus travelling along the only remaining route out of Khan al-Shih, reportedly killing seven civilians. Later the same day, air strikes hit the Martyr Ziyad al-Bikal field hospital, putting the facility out of service. No casualties were reported.

11. On 11 June, in the Damascus suburb of Sayyidah Zainab, in the vicinity of the Qabr al-Sitt camp, two explosions left at least 14 civilians, including five Palestine refugees, dead and many others wounded. That was the fourth such attack in

Sayyidah Zainab in 2016. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

12. Intensified fighting between various parties continued in several parts of Aleppo governorate. A high tempo of air strikes and shelling by pro-government forces of areas of the city of Aleppo controlled by non-State armed groups was recorded. For example, on 4 May, the Ballirmun district was allegedly hit by several air strikes, killing six persons. On 17 May, Rashidin district was allegedly hit by several air strikes, killing two children. On 30 May, air strikes hit residential buildings in Sukkari and Kallasah, in eastern Aleppo, killing at least 16 civilians and injuring another 30, according to first responders. On 31 May, a mortar hit the Ihsan Charity Medical Centre. The attack injured 45 persons and the hospital sustained physical damage. Early in June, the Bayan hospital in eastern Aleppo was hit, killing at least 10 people and damaging the facility. Meanwhile, the city of Aleppo is still suffering from heavily reduced basic services, with the electricity supply reportedly limited to 10 hours a week and water for 1 day out of every 10.

13. At the same time, non-State armed opposition groups continued their attacks on government-held areas of the city of Aleppo. According to information received by OHCHR, in the first half of May, mortars hit a number of western Aleppo neighbourhoods, including Salah al-Din, Sulaymaniyah, Khalidiyah and Maydan, killing several civilians, injuring many more and causing substantial damage to residential buildings. For example, on 3 May, the Dubayt maternity hospital in western Aleppo was hit and put out of service, although OHCHR was unable to confirm exactly how that occurred. Reports from the government-controlled Syrian Arab News Agency stated that shells fired from parts of Aleppo controlled by non-State armed opposition groups had hit the hospital, leaving 3 civilians dead and at least 15 others injured. Between 19 and 21 May, the United Nations hub in western Aleppo was hit by several rockets, with no casualties among United Nations staff.

14. Fighting, including sniper fire and rocket attacks, between members of the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units and non-State armed groups continued along the Castillo road, one of the last remaining major supply routes into the eastern part of the city of Aleppo, where some 300,000 people reside. An aerial bombardment along the road during May was also reported. The road is frequently closed when fighting intensifies, then re-opened when it abates. Air strikes were also reported in adjacent villages north of the road. For example, on 26 May, an air strike on the village of Anadan reportedly injured more than 10 civilians. On 27 May, five air strikes on the town of Kafr Hamra allegedly killed a woman and injured seven other civilians. The same day, an air strike hit a bakery in Huraytan, reportedly killing at least 10 civilians and injuring dozens.

15. Fighting between non-State armed opposition groups and ISIL continued in northern Aleppo governorate. An ISIL offensive on the towns of Mari' and I'zaz and the surrounding area led to numerous civilian casualties and the displacement of some 35,000 people by late May. ISIL took further control of several villages controlled by non-State armed opposition groups situated on the approaches to Mari' and I'zaz. Civilians remaining in partially surrounded Mari' were allowed unimpeded access by non-State armed opposition groups to adjacent towns, with medical staff also being allowed in and out of the only remaining operational hospital.

16. In Idlib governorate, mutual shelling between the parties and intensified pro-government air strikes continued throughout the reporting period, killing and injuring civilians. On 5 May, the Kamunah and Ghita al-Rahmah informal settlements for displaced persons, located south of the town of Sarmada, were hit by what initial reports suggested was an air strike. Both the Syrian and the Russian authorities denied launching the attacks, stating that the explosions had been caused by shells or grenades fired by non-State armed opposition groups. First responders reported that at least 30 civilians had been killed and dozens others injured. Air strikes were also reported in other parts of Idlib, including the city of Idlib, Ariha, Ma'rrat al-Nu'man, Khan Shaykhun, Binnish and Hafsarjah. As a result, some 70 civilians were killed and many more injured, according to information received by OHCHR. Civilian infrastructure was also affected. For example, on 13 May, air strikes struck Ariha, hitting a local gynaecology and obstetrics hospital and injuring civilians. On 30 May, air strikes hit the national hospital in the city of Idlib, killing at least 26 civilians and injuring dozens more. A second air strike in the vicinity of Ibn Sina Hospital caused no casualties.

17. Non-State armed opposition groups continued to shell the besieged towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate. On 8 May, a civilian was reportedly killed and others were injured when mortars were fired at the besieged towns. Another three were reportedly killed in a similar attack on Fu'ah on 24 May. Shelling was also reported on 31 May, but no casualties were recorded.

18. On 23 May, terrorist attacks hit the coastal towns of Jablah, Ladhiqiyah governorate, and Tartus, Tartus governorate. Four explosions hit Jablah: one at the national hospital, one at the electricity directorate and two at a bus station. Two explosions occurred at a bus station in Tartus, with a third in a nearby residential area. OHCHR received reports that scores of people had been killed. The Government informed OHCHR in a note verbale dated 6 June that 40 people had been killed and 81 injured in the attacks in Tartus, while 122 people had been killed and 148 injured in the attacks in Jablah. Most of those killed or injured are believed to be civilians. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attacks. I released a statement in which I condemned the attacks. According to open sources, following the attacks, unidentified armed individuals allegedly attacked the Karnak shelter for internally displaced persons, south of Tartus, with multiple tents reportedly destroyed.

19. In Hama governorate, on 12 May, Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham fighters advanced on the village of Zarah and areas around Harbinafsah in the southern countryside. A number of civilians were allegedly executed and others kidnapped. In a note verbale to OHCHR, the Syrian authorities indicated that seven civilians, including three women, had been killed in the attack and another seven injured. They added that 130 persons had been taken to undisclosed locations, providing the names of 61 of them. According to open sources, government forces later conducted air strikes on and shelled areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups around Harbinafsah, Lataminah and Kafr Zayta.

20. In Homs governorate, fighting continued between ISIL and government forces in the eastern countryside. On 5 May, ISIL seized control of the Sh'ir oil field and pushed further to take control of several positions adjacent to the Jazal oil field on 17 May. On 5 May, ISIL reportedly conducted dual suicide attacks in Mukharram Fawqani in the eastern countryside, allegedly killing 12 people and injuring 40 others.

21. Fighting between government forces and ISIL continued in Dayr al-Zawr governorate, killing and injuring civilians. On 1 May, ISIL fighters fired mortar rounds into the besieged Jurah and Qusur neighbourhoods of the city of Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly killing two people. Some six people were killed and dozens more injured during other attacks in May. On 14 May, ISIL took over Assad Hospital for a few hours before being forced to withdraw. ISIL took some medical staff hostage and their whereabouts remains unknown. Meanwhile, in rural Dayr al-Zawr, several villages, including Muhaymidah, Junaynah, Hasanah and Ji'a, were hit by air strikes on 1 May. In Ji'a, 11 civilians were reportedly killed and some 10 injured. On 16 May, several air strikes on Albu Kamal reportedly killed three children. The origin of the air strikes could not be verified.

22. In Raqqah governorate, the Syrian Democratic Forces, supported by the United States-led coalition, launched an offensive against ISIL, including towards the city of Raqqah. Civilians were affected by the fighting: on 2 May, several air strikes hit Raqqah, including the area known as the "17th Division", located approximately 4 km outside the city and close to Ibn Rushd Garden and the power station. The raids allegedly killed at least 23 civilians and injured some 50 others. On 3 May, the United States Central Command stated that, on 2 May, the United States-led coalition had carried out two strikes near Raqqah targeting an ISIL "finance station" and "weapon storage factory". On 19 May, several air strikes on the village of Hamrah, in the east of the governorate, reportedly killed three children and their mother.

23. In Hasakah governorate, fighting involving government forces, Kurdish forces and listed terrorist groups continued to result in civilian casualties. On 18 May, military clashes erupted between pro-government militiamen and Kurdish police in the city of Hasakah. The clashes reportedly began after a disagreement over the administration of high school exams. On the same day, three primary school pupils were killed in the crossfire that resulted from infighting between the Sutoro armed group and the National Defence Forces in the vicinity of the national hospital in the city. Elsewhere, on 21 May, a restaurant in Qamishli was attacked with hand grenades, followed by two suicide attacks, reportedly killing at least three civilians and injuring eight others. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

24. Fighting continued in the southern Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period. On 19 May, non-State armed opposition groups launched a military operation against government forces in the northern countryside of Dar'a. In Musayfirah, shelling reportedly hit a settlement for internally displaced persons, resulting in several civilian casualties. Fighting also continued between non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front and ISIL-affiliated groups in the western countryside of Dar'a. Meanwhile, aerial bombardments continued to affect parts of Dar'a and Qunaytirah governorates, although no major displacement was reported.

25. The United States Central Command confirmed that at least 156 strikes had been carried out in May by the United States-led coalition against ISIL targets in Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr Hasakah, Homs and Raqqah governorates. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, meanwhile, provided no information on its operations in May, although in its briefing of 27 May it indicated that it would continue with military operations against ISIL and the Nusrah Front, and that strikes against "illegal oil production facilities" had intensified since 20 May. OHCHR received various reports of air strikes allegedly conducted by international actors

that caused civilian casualties. OHCHR was unable to adequately ascertain responsibility for those attacks, however.

26. There were developments with respect to several local agreements during the reporting period. The local ceasefire agreement pertaining to Wa'r district in Homs, which entered into force in December 2015, remained suspended owing to disagreements over the implementation of some aspects, including the status of detainees. The area was added to the list of locations designated as besieged by the United Nations as at 28 May following the closure by the Government of the main road to the district since early March and restrictions on freedom of movement for civilians. In May, the district came under sporadic attack by surrounding pro-government forces, causing civilian casualties. On 16 May, a woman was killed and several others were injured by shelling. On 18 May, shooting was reported, allegedly causing several injuries. Reports of shelling from Wa'r into government-controlled areas were also recorded. On 30 May, 153 twelfth graders and 68 ninth graders from Wa'r were permitted to leave the besieged neighbourhood to sit their exams.

27. In the besieged area of Mu'addamiyah in Rif Dimashq, negotiations continued between the Government and the local negotiation committee. Both sides implemented goodwill gestures. On 29 May, the local negotiation committee raised the Syrian flag over the municipal building and removed barricades inside the town. The Government allowed some humanitarian assistance, including bread, to enter the town, although the amounts and type of assistance were insufficient to meet the full needs of residents. The Government also permitted some medical evacuations. Both sides agreed to continue discussions on the local agreement in order to overcome controversial issues.

28. The secretary-general of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, offered his condolences upon the killing of a senior Hizbullah commander in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mustafa Badr al-Din, in Damascus on 13 May. As on previous occasions, he acknowledged the presence of Hizbullah fighters in the country and promised to increase the presence.

B. Human rights

29. OHCHR continued to receive reports of serious violations and abuses of human rights, including arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial killings, in government-run detention facilities and by non-State armed opposition groups. On 7 May, a 15-year-old boy reportedly died after having been tortured at a military security branch in Damascus. He had been arrested in 2014 at a government checkpoint in the city of Dayr al-Zawr while on his way to school to sit his exams.

30. On 1 May, political detainees began rioting in Hama central prison, taking at least six guards hostage. The unrest was reportedly triggered by the attempted transfer of five detainees to Saydnaya prison, where it was feared that death sentences allegedly handed down against them would be carried out. On 8 May, both sides reached an agreement by which 500 political detainees would be released, as would the guards. The guards were subsequently released, while the detainees are being released in batches, with several released each day, although there have been reports of no detainees having been released on certain days. The situation remains tense.

31. In Rif Dimashq governorate, OHCHR received reports that non-State armed opposition groups in Khan al-Shih were mistreating captured members of pro-government forces during continuing fighting in the area.

32. On 5 May, Kurdish forces reportedly detained 30 men at checkpoints in the area of Ayn al-Arus, located south of Tall Abyad; the men were accused of cooperating with ISIL. Their whereabouts remains unknown.

33. Between 22 and 24 May, residents of Kafr Nubl protested against the arbitrary detention of dozens of the town's residents by the Nusrah Front. In Saraqib, Idlib governorate, on 20 May, residents protested against the execution of a male resident by the Nusrah Front following what protesters stated was an unfair trial by an illegitimate court. The group also reportedly publicly executed two civilians at the Salqin roundabout in Saraqib on 20 May; the men had been accused of collaborating with the Government.

34. On 3 May, in Tabaqah marketplace, ISIL publicly beheaded a male civilian accused of spying for coalition forces. On 23 May, ISIL publicly stoned a 16-year-old boy accused of homosexuality.

35. Fighting between non-State armed opposition groups in eastern Ghutah allegedly resulted in the death of an obstetrician in his home in Duma on 3 May by a stray bullet. On 17 May, in Bayt Siwa, two civilians, including a woman, were reportedly killed in cross-fire that resulted from infighting.

C. Humanitarian response

36. In May, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all modalities, from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders, pursuant to resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (see table 1). Non-governmental organizations also continued to deliver assistance, in line with previous months. The Government continued to provide basic services to areas under its control and in many areas beyond its control.

Table 1
Number of people reached by United Nations system organizations in May 2016

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	57 750
International Organization for Migration	55 556
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	701 533
United Nations Children's Fund	1 600 000
United Nations Development Programme	1 500 000 (41,452 directly and 1,475,335 indirectly)
United Nations Population Fund	46 780
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	352 686
World Food Programme	4 000 000
World Health Organization	1 480 707 (treatments)

37. Cross-border deliveries continued during the reporting period. In May, 20 consignments consisting of 559 trucks crossed from Turkey and Jordan to the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015), benefiting millions of people (see annex, map 1, for more information on United Nations cross-border convoys in May). Eight of those consignments crossed from Bab al-Hawa (389 trucks), four from Bab al-Salam (26 trucks) and eight from Ramtha (144 trucks).

38. In line with Security Council resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including of its content, destination and number of beneficiaries. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations, monitoring 559 trucks in the 20 consignments in May, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Mechanism continued to benefit from excellent cooperation with the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

39. In May, inter-agency convoys to the besieged and hard-to-reach locations listed in table 2 were completed (see annex, map 2, for more information on access to besieged and hard-to-reach locations). From 10 April to 12 June, the World Food Programme (WFP) successfully completed 51 airdrop rotations, delivering food items sufficient to cover some 100,000 people with 41 kg family food rations that included chickpeas, beans, rice and vegetable oil, lentils, bulgur wheat, salt and sugar. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to reach Yarmouk residents by providing assistance in adjacent neighbourhoods, from which they could collect the aid.

Table 2
Inter-agency convoys at the end of April and in May 2016

Date	*Location*	*Number of beneficiaries*	*Type of assistance*
27 April and 2 May	Talbisah	60 000	Multisectoral assistance. During the loading of the convoy on 27 April, the Syrian authorities removed some psychotropic and anaesthetic medicines.
4 and 8 May	Qaryatayn	3 250	Multisectoral assistance.
6 May	Bludan	35 000	Health, education, non-food items and water, sanitation and hygiene materials.
18 May	Eastern Harasta	10 000	Multisectoral assistance. Several health items, such as surgical and burn kits, basic health kits, scissors and parts of midwifery kits, were not approved/ removed by the Syrian authorities.
22 May	Qadsiya	25 000	Multisectoral assistance. Several health items, such as surgical and burn kits, basic health kits, scissors and parts of midwifery and diarrhoea treatment kits, were not approved/removed by the Syrian authorities.
22 May	Hamah	15 000	Multisectoral assessments and medical assistance. Several health items, such as surgical and burn kits, basic health kits, scissors, parts of midwifery and diarrhoea treatment kits, were not approved/ removed by the Syrian authorities.
25 May	Hulah	71 000	Food, nutrition, hygiene kits and educational materials.

40. United Nations agencies also undertook single-agency deliveries to cross-line and hard-to-reach locations, or reached those locations through their regular programmes during the reporting period. For example, WFP reached 368,515 people in 14 hard-to-reach and besieged locations in seven governorates. The World Health Organization (WHO) and its implementing partners delivered assistance to 212,158 people across conflict lines. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reached some 220,000 people in besieged and hard-to-reach locations in Rif Dimashq and Homs governorates through its regular programmes. In Yalda, UNRWA continued the provision of humanitarian assistance, including that of 10,800 food parcels and 10,800 hygiene kits, in addition to health consultations for 1,367 residents from Yarmouk, Babila, Bayt Sahm and Yalda, and an additional 147 dental consultations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supported 200 pupils from hard-to-reach areas who sat their final exams in the city of Aleppo through the distribution of mattresses, blankets, jerrycans and kitchen sets at six schools that had been designated by the Ministry of Education as temporary shelters during the exam period.

Humanitarian access

41. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need of assistance remained extremely challenging in many areas as a result of deliberate restrictions by the parties on the movement of people and goods, active conflict and shifting conflict lines.

42. Access to the 4.6 million people living in besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line locations as at 31 May remained of critical concern. Only two besieged areas and six hard-to-reach locations could be accessed in May through UNRWA and inter-agency convoys: eastern Harasta, Yarmouk, Talbisah, Qaryatayn, Bludan, Qudssiya, Hameh and Hulah. The United Nations also continued to reach those in besieged Dayr al-Zawr through airdrops, although several weeks of airdrops have delivered an amount of food equivalent to only one road convoy. Overall, the United Nations agencies and partners reached 55 of the 154 besieged and hard-to-reach areas (36 per cent) through either inter-agency convoys or single agency deliveries. Details on the assistance to those areas in May are contained in table 3.

Table 3
United Nations deliveries to hard-to-reach, besieged and priority cross-line locations, May 2016

Sector (United Nations delivery only)	*Number of people reached (as a percentage of 4.6 million)*
Food security	398 000 (8.7)
Health (treatments)	841 000 (18.3)
Non-food items	60 000 (1.3)
Water, sanitation and hygiene	128 350 (2.8)

43. Active conflict in several governorates hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and people's access to essential services. Markets, schools, medical centres and other civilian infrastructure were damaged as a result of fighting in May, reducing the availability of basic and essential services in critical areas. The offices of the United Nations and local non-governmental organizations

were also damaged. The fighting also disrupted humanitarian supply lines to communities at risk. For example, the security situation along the Castillo road resulted in the suspension of humanitarian deliveries to the eastern part of the city of Aleppo several times in May and early June. The United Nations and its partners have pre-positioned supplies in case of further access constraints in and around Aleppo. Meanwhile, in northern Aleppo governorate, health partners had to evacuate four hospitals and several primary health facilities and suspend their primary and secondary health activities in and around I'zaz and the Mari' area following an ISIL offensive. Elsewhere, several approved inter-agency convoys to hard-to-reach areas, including the subdistricts of Harbinafsah, Kafr Zayta and Madiq Castle, were put on hold at the request of the Government until security conditions improved.

44. Deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties also continued to prevent aid delivery. For example, WFP continued to be unable to gain access to populations in need in ISIL-controlled areas of the country, given that all plans to deliver assistance to those areas are suspended owing to the inability to work independently and monitor activities. That is preventing WFP from reaching Raqqah and most of Dayr al-Zawr governorates and certain areas in northern rural Aleppo, southern rural Hasakah and north-western rural Hama. As regards the situation in Khan al-Shih, UNRWA submitted a note verbale to the Syrian authorities to request approval for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the area. That request was denied on 12 May.

45. On 19 May, the United Nations submitted its inter-agency convoy plan for June that included requests to reach 1.1 million beneficiaries across 34 besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line locations. On 5 June, the United Nations submitted a written request to the Syrian authorities reiterating its request for full approval to deliver overland assistance to areas that had been partially approved or not approved under the plan. The United Nations also sought access by air to Darayya, Duma and Moadamiya in Rif Dimashq governorate and to Wa'r in Homs governorate, should overland access to any of those locations not be granted by 10 June.

46. By 14 June, in response to the plan, the Syrian authorities granted approval in full to 16 locations for 355,250 people; 14 locations were partially approved, with restrictions on the type of assistance and/or a reduction in the number of approved beneficiaries to 396,200 (a difference of 176,800 between the number requested and the approved target); and 4 locations, with a total of 208,500 people, were not approved. Of the 17 besieged areas requested, the United Nations has approvals to reach 16, reaching either the full population in need or part thereof. In total, for June, the Government authorized the United Nations to deliver assistance to 68 per cent of the requested population in need under the plan: delivery in full to 32 per cent and delivery with conditions to 36 per cent. Unapproved or only partially approved requests mean that 32 per cent of planned beneficiaries will not be reached. The Syrian authorities have also approved eight additional locations not requested by the United Nations.

47. The Nusaybin/Qamishli crossing in Hasakah governorate has been temporarily closed by the Turkish authorities owing to security concerns since 27 December 2015 (the crossing is not authorized for use under resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015)). WFP stocks of monthly family food rations in the governorate were completely exhausted in March 2016. Currently, WFP has only ready-to-eat parcels available sufficient for up to 5,420 people there. The delivery of

food assistance for a planned 275,000 people in May could not take place. However, WFP provided emergency stocks of ready-to-eat rations to 10,630 people staying in shelters for internally displaced persons in the cities of Qamishli and Hasakah. The United Nations sent a note verbale on 23 May to the Syrian authorities requesting access to Qamishli by air from Damascus. On 2 June, the Syrian authorities agreed to the implementation of an air bridge into Hasakah governorate from Damascus. Separately, on 26 May and 1 June, UNHCR airlifted non-food items for some 50,000 people to Qamishli from Amman.

48. As at 31 May, 113 visas for United Nations staff had been approved, of which 58 were new visas and 55 renewals. Some 27 requests remained pending, and 4 had been rejected.

49. A total of 16 international non-governmental organizations are authorized to operate in the Syrian Arab Republic. Five more have applications pending approval by the Government. International non-governmental organizations continued to face administrative hurdles and restrictions that affect their ability to operate, including in gaining permission to undertake independent needs assessments.

50. The number of national non-governmental organizations authorized to partner with United Nations organizations increased from 145 to 147 in May, with two added to the list in Homs and Damascus governorates. Authorized national non-governmental organizations continued to operate under complex procedures in partnering with United Nations agencies.

Besieged areas

51. The number of people living in areas designated by the United Nations as besieged currently stands at 590,200. That is up from 517,700 in my previous report, following the addition of the Wa'r district of the city of Homs. Meanwhile, Zabadin has been removed from the list of besieged areas in eastern Ghutah following the retaking of the town by the Government. Humanitarian conditions in besieged areas continue to be dire. The United Nations has been standing by ready to deliver assistance to all besieged locations as soon as access is granted. In besieged areas, the flow of commercial supplies through official routes remained largely blocked, leading to high prices for commodities reaching besieged areas through unofficial and irregular supply lines. Freedom of movement remained heavily restricted, although limited numbers are sporadically allowed to exit and re-enter some besieged areas. Indications of severe trauma were observed during inter-agency convoys to besieged areas, with children being particularly affected. Meanwhile, significant numbers of children appear to have been recruited into armed groups, with many boys under 18 years of age — in uniform or plain clothes — brandishing weapons.

52. In May, the United Nations and its partners assisted some 130,000 people in besieged areas (21 per cent of the total besieged population) through inter-agency convoys, WFP airdrops, UNRWA operations and other single-agency operations.

53. In eastern Ghutah, Rif Dimashq, some 282,500 people remain besieged by government forces in Duma, eastern Harasta, Arbin, Zamalka, Ain Tarma, Hammura, Jisrein, Kafr Batna and Saqba. Zabadin is no longer considered besieged following its full retaking by the Government in May, with the population fleeing to other parts of eastern Ghutah, including Kafr Batna and Misraba. On 18 May, an inter-agency convoy of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the International Committee

of the Red Cross and the United Nations reached besieged eastern Harasta with food and other humanitarian supplies for 10,000 people — the first delivery since March 2013. Several health items, such as surgical and burn kits, basic health kits, scissors and parts of midwifery kits, were not approved by the Ministry of Health. Elsewhere, on 25 May, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered a small quantity of medicines and school bags to Duma. On 10 June, the United Nations and partners completed the first of a multi-phase delivery to bring food, nutritional items, health, hygiene and other humanitarian supplies to some 40,000 people in Duma.

54. In Madaya and Bquine, in Rif Dimashq governorate, some 43,000 people remain besieged by government forces. On 15 May, the Syrian authorities allowed 68 pupils and a few teachers to exit/enter Madaya to sit their final exams. An inter-agency convoy with multisectoral assistance for 40,000 people is pending the parties making final arrangements to facilitate safe passage for the convoys, as part of the Four Towns agreement.

55. In Zabadani, Rif Dimashq governorate, some 700 people remain besieged by government forces. Although not approved under the May plan, a multisectoral convoy is pending the parties making final arrangements to facilitate safe passage for the convoys, as part of the Four Towns agreement.

56. In Fu'ah and Kefraya, Idlib governorate, some 20,000 people remain besieged by non-State armed opposition groups and the Nusrah Front. An inter-agency convoy with multisectoral assistance for 20,000 people is pending the parties making final arrangements to facilitate safe passage for the convoys, as part of the Four Towns agreement.

57. In Darayya, Rif Dimashq governorate, about 4,000 people remain besieged by government forces. Under the May plan, the Syrian authorities granted conditional approval for Darayya, limiting the delivery of assistance to baby milk and school and medical supplies. Notwithstanding the guarantees and approvals received from the Syrian authorities, a convoy and assessment mission planned for 12 May was aborted following extensive negotiations on the content of the convoy. Following intense negotiations at various levels, an inter-agency convoy was finally deployed on 1 June to Darayya to deliver initial assistance, consisting of medical supplies, vaccines and nutritional items for children. That was the first time the United Nations had entered the town with assistance in nearly four years, and followed an assessment mission on 16 April. On 9 June, the United Nations and its partners delivered food, nutrition, health and medical, water, sanitation and hygiene and education assistance to Darayya, as a follow-up to the initial convoy. According to unconfirmed reports, dozens of barrel bombs were reportedly dropped on Darayya the following day.

58. In Madamiyet Elsham, Rif Dimashq governorate, about 45,000 people remain besieged by government forces. Under the May plan, the Syrian authorities granted conditional approval, limiting the delivery of assistance to certain types and quantities of aid supplies. An inter-agency convoy that was supposed to reach the town on 14 May was, however, unable to deploy owing to a lack of final approval. Following intense negotiations at various levels, on 1 and 3 June, inter-agency convoys were finally deployed to the town to deliver food and health supplies for 45,000 people. The third phase of those convoys was approved on 7 June.

59. In Yarmouk, Damascus governorate, some 10,000 people have been besieged by government forces and non-State armed opposition groups. UNRWA humanitarian

missions into Yalda resumed on 2 May and continued uninterrupted throughout the month. During May, 6,000 civilian families from Yarmouk, Yalda, Babila and Bayt Sahm received food parcels and hygiene kits and 1,367 refugees received health services, including 147 dental consultations.

60. In the government-controlled western neighbourhoods of the city of Dayr al-Zawr, some 110,000 people have been besieged by ISIL. From 10 April to 12 June, WFP successfully completed 51 airdrop rotations. The quantities airdropped to date are sufficient to provide a 41 kg ration to all households registered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

61. In Wa'r, in Homs governorate, about 75,000 people have been besieged by government forces. The first phase of a convoy delivering multisectoral assistance could not proceed on 5 May, even though facilitation letters had been received and trucks loaded. The convoy was put on hold at the request of the Government, and security personnel were requested to offload the trucks. On 30 May, 153 twelfth graders and 68 ninth graders from Wa'r were allowed to leave the besieged neighbourhood to sit their exams. On 11 June, a joint mission of the Office of the Resident Coordinator and the Office of my Special Envoy for Syria to Homs was conducted in order to diffuse tensions between the Government and the Wa'r local committee. On 14 June, written approval was received for an inter-agency convoy to Wa'r.

Attacks on medical facilities and free passage of medical supplies, personnel and equipment

62. In blatant disregard for the special protected status of health-care facilities under international humanitarian law, and for resolution 2286 (2016), adopted on 3 May, medical facilities continued to be damaged or destroyed as a result of fighting. The United Nations and health partners have received reports, which are being verified, of 10 attacks on medical facilities in May. Several attacks early in June have also already been reported.

63. WHO and UNICEF continued to implement the nationwide vaccination campaign. The component of the campaign from within the Syrian Arab Republic began on 24 April and lasted for four days, reaching some 260,000 of a targeted 550,000 children in 10 governorates. Areas not reached as a result of insecurity and access challenges included parts of Damascus, Hama and Rif Dimashq governorates. As to Idlib governorate, non-State armed opposition groups refused vaccine delivery and campaign implementation. On 26 May, the cross-border component of the nationwide campaign began in Idlib and Hama and in some parts of Aleppo. In the first six days of the campaign, more than 200,000 of a target of some 500,000 children for those three governorates were vaccinated. Insecurity has hampered the campaign: the intensified air strikes in Aleppo and Idlib towards the end of May resulted in major access problems, and the campaign was suspended for four days in the city of Idlib because of insecurity. The campaign has not been rolled out in parts of Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr governorates owing to lack of access.

64. In 2016, WHO has submitted 23 individual requests to the Government to deliver medical supplies to 86 locations in 10 governorates. The Government has approved six requests for 31 locations, one of which was to deliver medical supplies to Duma, in Rif Dimashq. Meanwhile, 17 requests for 55 locations remained unanswered.

65. The removal of life-saving medicines and medical supplies continued, with hundreds of treatments removed from convoys in May intended for Talbisah (Homs), eastern Harasta (Rif Dimashq) and Qadsiya (Rif Dimashq). Removed items included surgical supplies, anaesthetics, trauma kits, mental health medicines and burn kits. Supplies for an estimated 150,000 treatments have been removed from convoys since the beginning of the year.

Safety and security of staff and premises

66. A total of 29 United Nations staff members, 27 of whom are UNRWA area staff, as well as 1 from UNDP and 1 from UNICEF, continue to be detained or are missing. A total of 87 humanitarian workers have been killed in the conflict since March 2011: 17 staff members of the United Nations, 53 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, 8 volunteers and staff members of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and 9 staff members of international non-governmental organizations. Of the 87 killed, 2 have been killed since 1 January 2016.

III. Observations

67. I am deeply concerned by increased reports of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by all parties to the conflict, including designated terrorist groups, in particular the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. Medical facilities, markets and other public infrastructure continue to be attacked, causing widespread death and destruction. Such attacks must stop immediately. The parties to the conflict are failing to live up to their international legal obligations to protect civilians. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas not only kills and injures on a large scale, but also will have severe long-term humanitarian ramifications resulting from the destruction of the housing and essential infrastructure upon which civilians depend. No corner of the country has been left unscathed. As long as it continues, it will only force more and more people to leave their homes in a desperate search for safety.

68. Continuing violations and abuses of international human rights law by all the parties to the conflict remain of the highest concern. Large numbers of civilians continue to be held in government-run detention facilities, frequently without due process, subjected to terrible torture, and are being denied the right to a fair trial solely for having exercised their rights to freedom of speech, expression and peaceful assembly. At the same time, non-State armed opposition groups continue to arbitrarily deprive civilians of their liberty. Torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment seemingly aimed at maximizing suffering is often inflicted, along with killings of persons owing to their sexual orientation or perceived political affiliations. I condemn all such acts in the strongest terms as signs of a total disregard for basic human rights, which must cease immediately. There must be accountability for those and other violations. I repeat my call for the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

69. It is vital that the momentum with respect to humanitarian access sustained over the past few months continues and be expanded into the second half of the year. To date, progress in 2016 has been slow, uneven and hard-won, especially in May. However, the challenges and setbacks notwithstanding, the humanitarian

community has collectively worked from every angle to press for access to besieged locations. Since January, we have reached more than 50 per cent of the people in 16 of the 19 besieged locations, many of those more than once. It is far from sufficient, however. Too many of those in need continue to be beyond our reach. We remain committed and ready to deliver aid, through any possible modality, for civilians in desperate need, whoever and wherever they are. I urge the members of the Security Council, especially those with influence, to do their utmost to ensure that all requests and approvals to access besieged locations are translated into humanitarian deliveries that help us to alleviate the suffering of Syrian civilians, including through the work of the International Syria Support Group. However, let me be clear: granting access should never be conditional, depend upon political negotiations or be used as a bargaining chip in talks. These are fundamental tenets of international humanitarian law and must be respected by the parties.

70. While I welcome the recent progress in reaching some besieged locations, I wish to make clear that a complete lifting of all sieges is required. That dozens of barrel bombs were reportedly dropped in Darayya on 10 June, the day after the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered the first food aid to the town since November 2012, shows that the situation for people in besieged areas will not be resolved by delivering humanitarian aid. The only sustainable solution for the 590,200 people trapped and forced to live in horrific circumstances is an end to the sieges. Besiegement is not a natural or necessary consequence of conflict; it is a deliberate policy of parties, and one that can be undone if the political will to do so can be mustered.

71. Humanitarian agencies in the Syrian Arab Republic continue to do their utmost to reach the millions of men, women and children in need of life-saving assistance throughout the country, the many access and security challenges notwithstanding. That aid is delivered at great personal risk, in particular by Syrian organizations and volunteers, who are often the first responders in a volatile and dangerous environment. It has come at a high cost, with 87 humanitarian workers having lost their lives and hundreds of medical workers having been killed, including many over the past few weeks. I pay tribute to their sacrifice and bravery.

72. There is no military solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. All are losing while the country is disappearing, bleeding and dying before our eyes. I urge the international community and Syrian stakeholders to restore and consolidate the cessation of hostilities and improve humanitarian access as soon as possible to all in need throughout the country. I welcome the readiness of the Co-Chairs of the International Syria Support Group Task Force on the Ceasefire, the Russian Federation and the United States, to provide a credible and transparent joint assessment of major attacks on civilians to the Support Group and the Security Council. I am also encouraged that the Co-Chairs have committed themselves to improving the monitoring of the cessation of hostilities, and to minimizing aviation operations over populated areas. Those steps, along with actions against listed terrorist groups, were endorsed by the Support Group. The efforts of the Support Group and individual Member States, as well as Syrians themselves, have shown what can be achieved when there is the political will to solve problems. I appeal to all not to give up, but to redouble efforts to bring an end to this horrifying conflict and to support my Special Envoy for Syria to facilitate a peaceful and political resolution.

Syrian Arab Republic: United Nations cross-border operations under UNSC resolutions 2165/2191/2258 (July 2014 to May 2016)*

OCHA

UN Security Council Resolution 2165/2191/2258

Through the unanimous adoption of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) until 10 January 2017, the UN Security Council has authorized UN agencies and their partners to use routes across conflict lines and the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, to people in need in Syria. The government of Syria is notified in advance of each shipment and a UN monitoring mechanism has been established to oversee loading in neighboring countries and confirm the humanitarian nature of consignments.

Sector Classifications

Food: food baskets

NFIs: dignity kits, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mattresses, winterization kits, tarpaulins

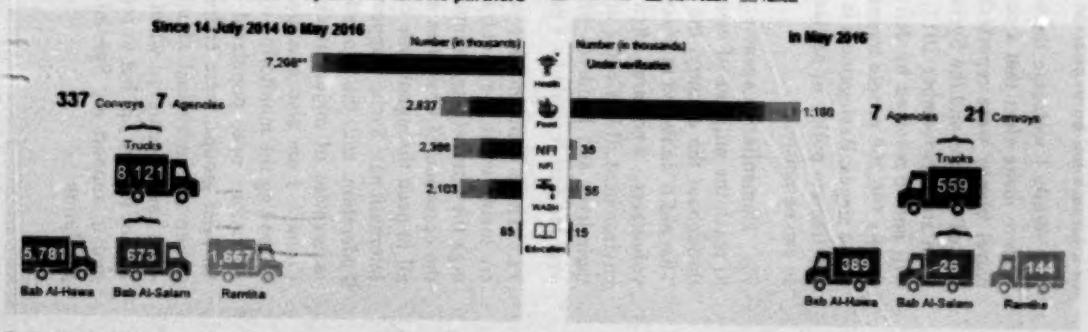
WASH: basic water kits for families, water purification tablets, hygiene kits for families and babies, sanitary napkins, diapers

Health: emergency health kits, surgical kits, reproductive health kits, midwifery kits, medical consumables

Education: recreational kits

Number of Beneficiaries Assisted by the UN and its partners

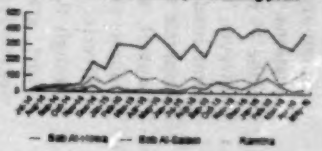
Bab Al-Hawa Bab Al-Salam Ramtha



Number of beneficiaries per month per sector

(in thousands)

Number of trucks per month per crossing point



Bab Al-Hawa — Bab Al-Salam — Ramtha

*Number of beneficiaries for health sector in May 2016 is under verification. **Number of beneficiaries for health sector since July 2014 to April 2016.

For feedback contact: Regional Office for the Syria Crisis (rohosyr@un.org) Creation date: 19 June 2016

Syrian Arab Republic: 2016 UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Operations (as of 15 June 2016)*

OCHA

Since the beginning of 2016, the UN and partners successfully delivered multi-sectoral assistance through inter-agency operations, reaching over 844,000 civilians in besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority cross-line locations with dire humanitarian needs. Many of these people were reached more than once. A total of 53 UN inter-agency convoy have been undertaken, reaching over 725,000 people. UNRWA has also delivered 30 convoys with multi-sectoral assistance to 19,000 in YB6**, including thousands of residents in and from Yarmouk. In addition, through 55 WFP-led airdrops, 868 metric tons of food supplies have been delivered to besieged parts of western Deir-ez Zor city. These materials are sufficient to provide food rations for approximately 100,000 people in need for one month.

PEOPLE REACHED**

844,325

HTR AREAS	BESIEGED
497,675	296,650

XL PRIORITY CROSS-LINE***	CONVOYS	AIRDROPS
50,000	83	55

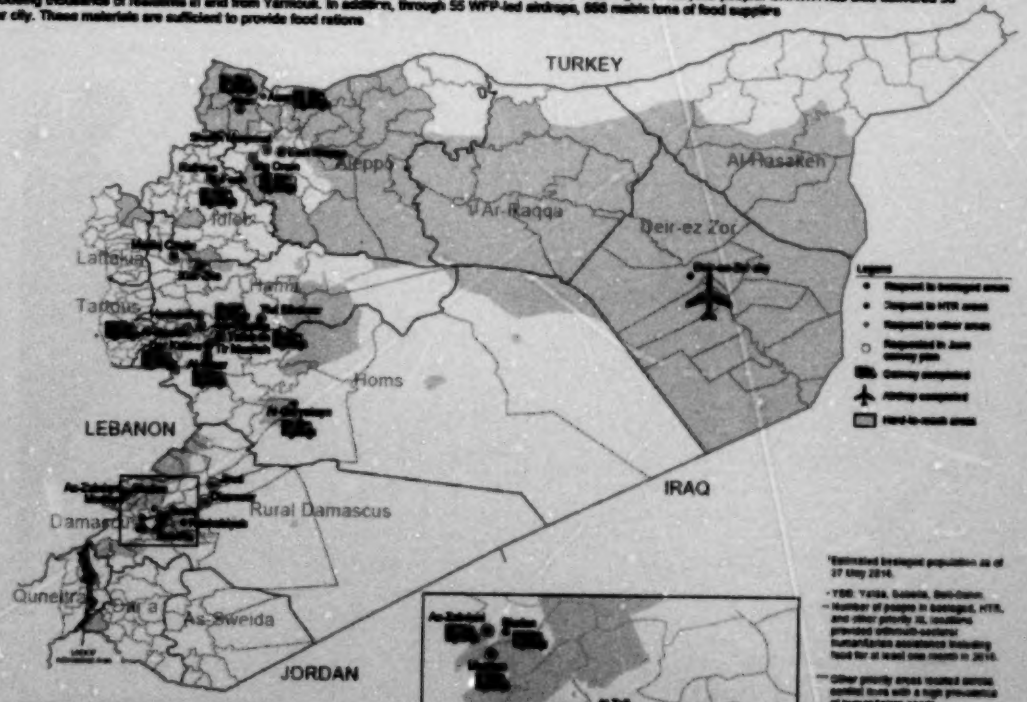
50% people reached in besieged areas

12.8% people reached in HTR areas

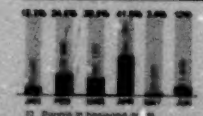
19 besieged locations reached

TIMELINE 2016

JAN	8 Operations to Al-Waer, 4 Towns****
FEB	18 Operations to Al-Waer, 4 Towns****, Kafr Batna town, Madamiyet Elsham, YB6*
MAR	21 Operations to 4 Towns****, Al-Hosha, Al-Waer, Big Oren, Sheikh, Kafr Batna sub-district, Madamiyet Elsham, YB6*
APR	31 Operations to Ashrfi, Aqabi, Deir-ez-Zor city, Kafr Batna sub-district, TP Madiah, YB6*, Al-Rastan, Talkalakh, 4 Towns****
MAY	43 Operations to Deir-ez-Zor city, Tafdnaz, Al-Ghariyahen, Sheikh, YB6* Kafr Harasta, Qudsaya, Hosh, Al-Hosh
JUN	17 Operations to Madamiyet Elsham, Darayya, Deir-ez-Zor city, Douma, Deir Kanfa



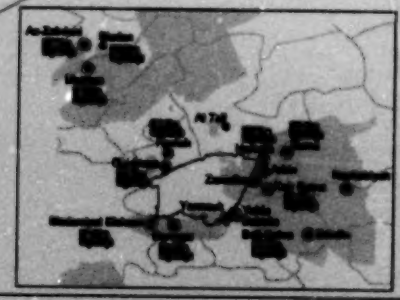
Number and percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas*



592,700*

Population in besieged areas

People in besieged as. a
People reached with food in besieged areas



*Estimated besieged population as of 27 May 2016.

** YB6: Yalda, Sbeineh, Beit Sahm.

*** Number of people in besieged, HTR, and other priority XL locations provided with multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance including food for at least one month in 2016.

**** Other priority areas reached across control lines with a high prevalence of humanitarian needs.

***** 4 Towns: Az-Zabadani, Madaya, Fuah & Kafraya.

† New number of people that received or still receive food assistance sufficient for one month within a 30-day period.
In the case of Deir-ez-Zor city beneficiaries of partial rations are counted as receiving new assistance once the planned food materials are delivered in full or a new round of deliveries begin.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Right of peoples to self-determination

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Seventy-first year

Letter dated 15 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the Chair's summary of a colloquium on the theme of reconciling self-determination and territorial integrity: models of self-governance as tools to promote peace and stability in Europe, which was held in Triesenberg, Liechtenstein, from 20 to 22 March 2016 (see annex).

The discussion among academics, experienced mediators and diplomats was aimed at considering new and innovative ways of thinking about self-determination that do not equate it with independence or secession, in particular, in the context of ongoing conflicts in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe area. The meeting was held in collaboration with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, and was informal and off-the-record in nature.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 71.

(*Signed*) Christian Wenaweser
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-10666 (E) 300616

Please recycle

A/70/955
S/2016/547

Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Colloquium on reconciling self-determination and territorial integrity: models of self-governance as tools to promote peace and stability in Europe Chair's summary

Triesenberg, Liechtenstein, 20-22 March 2016

Introduction

The first initiative of Liechtenstein upon joining the United Nations in 1990 was to explore innovative approaches to the implementation of the right of self-determination.[1] Reigning Prince Hans Adam II pioneered the idea of establishing a United Nations convention on the self-determination of peoples, inspired by the vision that conflicts should be decided on the basis of international law and the will of the people affected, without resorting to violence. Under the draft convention, each State party would undertake to "respect the aspirations of all communities within its territory to an appropriate degree of self-administration". In the draft, progressive levels of self-administration are envisaged for communities living within States, supported by international arrangements designed to mediate and settle differences, under international monitoring, with the goal of preventing, defusing and ending conflict, especially armed conflict. Independence through secession would be considered a last resort and only with the consent of the State. However, after a lively debate in 1992, the General Assembly decided at the time to defer consideration of the proposal.

As numerous conflicts within States as well as frozen conflicts remain unresolved — including in Europe — an open debate about contentious self-determination claims is of continued urgency and relevance. To that end, an eminent group of senior diplomats, mediators, experts, policy practitioners and scholars participated, upon the joint invitation of the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in New York and the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University[2] in a colloquium in Triesenberg, Liechtenstein. The goal of the meeting was to explore the ongoing tensions between the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity, to explore ways of reconciling the two and to consider the possibilities for innovative application of the right of self-determination as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution.

Hereditary Prince Alois of Liechtenstein and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Miroslav Lajčák, delivered keynote addresses at the meeting, which was co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in New York, Christian Wenaweser, and the Director of the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, Wolfgang Danspeckgruber.

[1] For the full text of the convention, see Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, *The Self-Determination of Peoples: Community, Nation, and State in an Interdependent World* (2002), pp. 365-392.

[2] For more information, visit https://lisd.princeton.edu/.

Summary of discussions

Discussions focused on the following three thematic areas:

(a) The historical development of the principle and right of self-determination, and its legal foundations, challenges and limitations;

(b) The principle's application as a conflict prevention and resolution mechanism in specific situations in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) area;

(c) Practical ideas about how to advance the debate about self-determination in the future.

A brief summary of each of the discussions follows below. The colloquium took place under the Chatham House Rule.

General discussion: reconciling the principles of self-Determination and territorial integrity

Key questions in the discussion included the relevance of the principle of self-determination in contemporary international law and international relations and the difficulties in reconciling it with the principle of territorial integrity. In addition, the participants were encouraged to think of emerging opportunities and challenges for the right of self-determination in its various forms during a time of changes in the international order.

Participants observed that the self-determination debates today were not confined solely to the realm of academia. The events in Crimea and eastern Ukraine were referred to as the most recent example of the concept's relevance to modern-day politics and conflicts. In addition, the self-determination principle has an enduring historical relevance. Its ideas can be traced back to the United States Declaration of Independence, United States President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations and subsequent decolonization efforts, and the International Covenants on Human Rights.

However, self-determination and territorial integrity continue to be among the most sensitive principles in international law. There has been enormous resistance to claims for self-determination by great Powers which have long feared its "empire-destroying capabilities". Also, the two concepts are often seen to be in conflict and difficult to reconcile. The principle of territorial integrity determines the very existence of a State. It is a basic pillar of international law that States are willing to defend, if necessary, by armed force. Self-determination, on the other hand, is subject to different interpretations. While some hold that it is a right that is exercised only once, at the moment when a State reaches independence, others are of the view that it is exercised regularly and on an ongoing basis. The question of who is entitled to the right (i.e., the notion of "peoples", and in particular the designation of indigenous peoples) has been discussed intensely and in different contexts and invoked in exceptional circumstances. It is a dynamic principle which ultimately also determines whether the State can develop independently and according to its own ideas of governance.

Some participants challenged the perceived difficulty in reconciling the two principles. It was posited that the drafters of the Charter of the United Nations included both principles in the text on an equal standing and thus did not consider

them to be incompatible. Typically, friction emerges only when the disputing parties cannot agree on which of the principles should take precedence in a given case. This creates a need for more defined rules and tools to manage territorial integrity and self-determination claims.

Some participants suggested that the international community, in particular the Security Council of the United Nations, should act as an arbitrator in situations involving self-determination claims. Others, however, challenged the idea that the Security Council can be a fair adjudicator since it typically only reflects the will of its five permanent members. Also, they observed that in the past some of the Security Council Powers have relied on the principle of self-determination to justify their "hegemonic interests".

Others pointed out the need to examine modern-day self-determination challenges in a manner which takes into account changing global realities, mainly fuelled by globalization, the weaker role of nation-States, the more prominent role of regions and regional integration, and the empowerment of the individual as a result of advances in technology. The twenty-first century is characterized by a growing influence of transnational ideas and networks, which in turn have implications for the exercise of sovereign rights, the character of political communities, and the meaning of boundaries. There was a call to move away from the State-based approach in international law to an individual-centred system — "determination of the self". In particular, participants underlined the need to include the voices of people living in places coping with self-determination challenges. These people often have a much more realistic view on how to work out the differences than diplomats.

It was also suggested that the behaviour of the State facing self-determination claims is often problematic, and prompts communities to challenge its authority and seek different governance arrangements. A participant pointed out that in many conflicts there was a lack of generosity of the State towards the community it wants to keep integrated. It was therefore legitimate to ask at what point a State abrogates its right to govern its territory.

Some also wondered how the dynamics of self-determination claims change once a party to the dispute resorts to violence and the use of force to achieve its goals. Claims for self-determination, often accompanied by the threat of use of force, may mask criminal networks pursuing commercial and business interests. Therefore, they suggested greater scrutiny of the groups seeking decentralization, greater levels of self-governance and sometimes independence.

While there are numerous examples of successful resolution of self-determination claims in the recent history of Europe (e.g., peaceful separation of Czechoslovakia as well as Serbia and Montenegro), participants stressed that the legal and political context was still not ripe to resolve other, sometimes protracted, crises resulting from self-determination claims (e.g., Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh). Many of these situations have led to stagnation in terms of good governance, justice, combating corruption and accountability. Therefore, new tools to mediate these conflicts must also focus on establishing a linkage between achieving peace and pursuing reforms.

Country-specific discussion

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The discussion was framed in the context of the viability and effectiveness of the Dayton Accords unique model of self-governance for the country's distinct communities, which ended war but did not bring peace. Overcoming "negative peace" and ensuring the functionality of the State also featured as prominent themes throughout the debate.

Participants generally agreed that the Dayton Accords had achieved their main goal, namely, ending the armed conflict. But it was also noted that the inflexible nature of the Accords continued to stifle the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and was consequently not conducive to the country's long-term security and stability. A participant characterized the Accords as "a mechanism of blockage", which prevented decisive action by the Government and was in part responsible for limited development gains in the last decade. It is therefore unsurprising that people had sought alternative visions of the future. Concerns were expressed about radicalizing tendencies in the country, often fuelled by outside actors, including the growing influence of Da'esh.

Another more fundamental problem regarding the sources of sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina surfaced in the debate. It was pointed out that the central authorities believed that the country's sovereignty came from the international recognition of the State, while the authorities in Republika Srpska viewed it differently. They believed that the legitimacy of the State relied on the consent from the citizens of the two entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska), and clung to their right to choose to be a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, a participant suggested, the international community might have to eventually accept that the will of the people in Republika Srpska was not compatible with the aspirations of the population in the Federation and to respect their calls for self-determination. However, this assertion was vehemently challenged by others. They noted that the international community viewed the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as non-negotiable and would continue to defend it. Independence for Republika Srpska would set back development gains and again spark instability in the Balkans. With both Serbia and Croatia as guarantors of the Dayton Accords and having a stake in the stability of the country, the Government of Serbia was not keen to accept Republika Srpska as an independent State or as a part of its territory. Secession by Republika Srpska would therefore be counterproductive and find no support in the international community.

A range of options were suggested as potential solutions to mitigate the dysfunctionality and lack of development due to the difficulties contained in the Dayton Accords. The need for a massive economic recovery plan (similar to the Marshall Plan) coupled with reform of State and local administration was identified as an essential element of progress. Also highlighted was the need to respect the rule of law and to fight corruption.

The European Union and other international organizations, including OSCE and the United Nations, would play an essential role in encouraging these reforms. Some suggested that Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to continue to move forward

at a faster pace towards the European Union, guided by the vision of "less Dayton, more Brussels". Others suggested that the Dayton Accords had to remain intact.

Some participants challenged the notion that the prospect of European Union membership could be an effective catalyst for internal reforms, good governance and economic development, as it was becoming increasingly clear that growing Euroscepticism and opposition to further enlargement across the Union made membership an unrealistic goal. Also, views of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina differed significantly between Republika Srpska (more negative) and the Federation (generally more positive).

The view was also expressed that the European Union's lack of a comprehensive strategy on Bosnia and Herzegovina had led to the dysfunctionality of the State in the first place, turning Bosnia and Herzegovina into a de facto "failed State". This notion was strongly countered by other participants, who insisted that, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was a weak State, it had still achieved several important advances, including the central Government's control of the entire territory, the establishment of a national defence force, the existence of one currency and low inflation and the issuance of identity cards and biometric passports.

One significant difficulty in advancing the discussions on the future of the country was that Bosnia and Herzegovina no longer featured prominently on the agenda of the international community, mainly due to many competing crises and lack of political will to engage. But participants agreed that much more needed to be done to fully stabilize the country, particularly in reconciling its many communities. One example cited was the issue of "two schools under one roof", which kept students apart on the basis of their ethnicity. Others interpreted this lack of a spotlight on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a positive sign that the country was on the right path to full recovery.

Questions raised for further discussion included: (a) whether and how self-determination principles might be implemented in cases where there was either no amenable constitution, no rule of law, no willingness to accept decentralization or no sense of national solidarity/community; and (b) whether it could be possible to craft a peace agreement which would not block progress and the effective functioning of the State.

Ukraine

In the light of the situation in Ukraine, the participants discussed the complex and controversial nature of the self-determination claims of communities in Crimea and the Donbass region. The discussion centred on the legitimacy of the claims and the true representation of the will of the communities affected.

Participants elaborated on the historical roots of the present conflict in Ukraine. Ottoman influence in the south, Polish and Austrian control in the west and Russian control in the east had created a fractured and contested Ukrainian identity over preceding centuries, with Kiev attempting to maintain a sense of national identity at the geographical centre. Various groups have in turn attempted to impose their version of Ukrainian identity along ethnic or linguistic lines. As a result, Ukraine currently faces the challenge of overcoming these divisive legacies in order to create a new and inclusive national identity.

The roots of the conflict also lie in Ukraine's desire for stability on the one hand and a more transformative, open identity on the other. Yet both ends of this spectrum rely on the connection to State sovereignty as the key to their identity, while suffering from the lack of an inclusive political process, a deficit of political leadership and a weak culture of dialogue in politics and civil society.

Participants thus identified four key causes of the current conflict, which must all be addressed simultaneously:

(a) Geopolitical struggle between the United States and Russia;

(b) Economic tension between the European Union and Russia;

(c) Internal debate about Ukrainian identity;

(d) "Postcolonial syndrome" in the struggle for identity between Russia and Ukraine.

The question of membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also generated disagreement. A pattern has emerged between two stark choices: either total allegiance to the West, or total allegiance to Russia (along the lines of Armenia or Belarus). Some participants argued that the West was irresponsible in falsely promising European Union or NATO membership to States like Ukraine or Georgia, which prevented the establishment of an in-between paradigm and produced "romantics instead of realists". While some maintained that any policy aiming for the membership of Ukraine in NATO would be counterproductive and needlessly antagonistic, others posited that anything other than full Ukrainian membership in Western institutions would be disregarded and violated by Russia. Another view expressed was that there was also a growing scepticism among NATO members themselves about the Ukrainian membership.

The influence of the European Union in the origins and relevance for the resolution of the current conflict in Ukraine remained in dispute. Some argued that the European Union had not contemplated welcoming Ukraine as a new member in the near future and that Russia was in fact not opposed to an eventual Ukrainian European Union membership, as long as the bilateral link with Moscow remained open. Others maintained that the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, while intended by the European Union as a positive trigger for modernization, was not a good deal for Ukraine, and that the European Union also rebuffed President Viktor Yanukovych's requests for financial assistance, forcing him to turn to Russia.

Analysis of the Minsk negotiation and ceasefire process was overwhelmingly negative, and discussions turned to possible trajectories and outcomes of the current conflict. The most favourable scenario envisioned the reintegration of the Donbass, facilitated by Moscow-Washington-Brussels diplomacy and tackling the so-far unaddressed political portions of the Minsk agreement alongside other key questions, such as the future security status of Ukraine and geo-economic issues such as trade agreements.

Another possibility was that of "negative peace", with Ukraine de facto divided for the next decade. Following a reconfirmation of the Helsinki principles, one part under the control of Kiev would reform along European Union standards and principles, while Donbass would exist apart, like Transnistria or Abkhazia.

A third "cold war scenario" posited neither peace nor armed conflict. This worst-case option would be a net negative for European security, as lack of internal reform in Ukraine alongside uncontrolled violence and tension could mean a return to armed conflict at any time. This dangerous state of affairs reflected the current status of the Minsk ceasefire, with continued military and civilian casualties.

In a final scenario, Ukraine would recognize the status of Crimea as part of Russia and decentralize control in the Donbass in return for the acceptance by Russia of NATO membership of Ukraine. The West and Russia would then provide aid in the form of a reconstruction package for Ukraine.

Participants expressed various counter-arguments to each of the above outcomes, citing the strength of Ukrainian patriotism and resistance to decentralization, the lack of incentive to reform, particularly while in a state of enhanced antagonism with Russia, and criticism that it would be naïve to expect Russia to uphold any promises made about Ukraine's security status. Many participants argued that Ukraine needed to be told some "hard truths", even if the West wished to hide behind mutual antagonism towards Russia. Many of the current weaknesses and failures of Ukraine were not merely the result of Russian intervention. On the contrary, they were in some instances the result of insufficient political will for reform and the lack of external pressure asking for such reforms. Ukraine did not apply the rule of law, and the Western donor countries did not keep the Government accountable for its failure to do so. Yet, reforming Ukraine, encouraging decentralization and stopping the spread of extreme nationalism was indispensable to creating the basis for future reconciliation and reintegration efforts.

The session concluded with a discussion of potential solutions for the situation in Ukraine. One participant argued that a direct appeal to Ukraine's civil society and business sector was the only way to exert effective pressure on the governing authorities to enact meaningful reform. The Government had to be held accountable for rebuilding State capacity and administration, especially in health care and education, in order to begin to heal the fracturing that was so widespread and detrimental to Ukrainian society. A three-pronged approach was needed to strengthen the economy and other State institutions (in particular the military) simultaneously. At the same time, the Government needed to find a way to work with Russia to cooperate in closing and monitoring the border, a major confidence-building step, alongside demining the conflict zone, facilitating movement across the ceasefire line and people-to-people contact. Another participant argued that Ukraine needed a "Marshall Plan" for economic development, and that civil society should exert strong pressure so that the reforms remained transparent and that there was pressure on politicians to work towards these goals.

It was pointed out that even full implementation of the Minsk agreement would not resolve the core issues. The view was expressed that, unless a power-sharing or participatory agreement was reached with the authorities in de facto control of the Donbass region, disintegration would continue to override attempts at reintegration. At the same time, many argued that self-governance alone would be a "recipe for disaster". Ukraine could not afford "evolutionary change", according to one participant, as the system was so endemically corrupt that any step-by-step reforms would be overwhelmed and negated by the corrosive power of the oligarchy and entrenched corruption. Ukraine required nothing less than "revolutionary change" to address the core internal weaknesses and reposition itself internationally.

Finally, participants were urged to look beyond the European context for global examples of conflict management that might be useful in addressing the unique case of Ukraine. One participant chastised the European tendency to look only at models from their own continent. Ukraine might benefit from creativity in looking at the rest of the world, for example the case of Myanmar, currently transitioning from an authoritarian regime and caught in the geopolitical tension between India and China. While the overall theme of the conference focused on the tension between territorial integrity and self-determination in European case studies, participants agreed that this type of creative thinking and global perspective would be crucial in applying new crisis-management and peacebuilding innovations to seemingly intractable conflicts.

Reflections from other relevant situations

This session provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on a growing number of other situations which feature tensions between self-determination and territorial integrity. In particular, participants were asked to examine a range of options available, or that could be imagined, to address self-determination claims and permit self-governance in a non-violent manner compatible with international law.

Some participants questioned whether the State was the best tool to provide for maintenance of peace and stability, and whether there might be alternatives to achieving this goal, especially since many times in modern history the State had turned against its citizens.

Questions were also raised about the moral underpinnings that drive the desire for self-determination, among them the idea of fairness and the desire of the individual and the people desire to decide their own fate. While the individual and the people are often understood as the driving force behind self-determination in theory, in practice this is not always the case. In many instances, borders and the fates of people were decided by outside Powers (e.g., the Sykes-Picot Agreement).

Therefore, some participants called for the re-interpretation of self-determination that places less emphasis on an ethno-nationalist right of people to have their own country. A participant posited that the time was right to promote the idea of self-determination on an individual level, since many people reject a singular ethnonationalist identity and have multiple identities (and passports). Increasingly it was not just the elites, but also the wider public, which was becoming more cosmopolitan. Some self-determination movements, such as the Catalan government, had been very explicit that their project was not ethnonationalist but inclusive for all (e.g., even the Eritrean Catalans have the right to vote). This trend, however, also had negative effects. There were also negative examples of such transboundary approaches, such as Da'esh, which draws followers and fighters from all corners of the world.

This idea of greater emphasis on individual self-determination was countered by others who reminded the group that despite notions of cosmopolitan identity, one still could not travel without a passport — and a significant number of individuals across the world did not own a passport or in extreme cases did not even have a legal identity. It was re-emphasized that populations in places such as Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Donbass often felt disempowered and threatened by the very same cosmopolitan ideas. Collectivist world views persisted, clinging to the past for a sense of control.

This question was considered to be of particular importance since we live in a time of a drastic repositioning of the geopolitical order. The State and its effective authority remained important means to providing security. However, "virtual self-determination" would become more potent due to advancements in information technology. Going forward, we could not solely rely on States to undertake the diversity of governance roles that were required. Therefore, concerned citizens had to play an active role in transforming their governance structures, sometimes with external support, through third-party entities, and sometimes without. Some maintained that issues of self-determination should be adjudicated at the local level, where actors already existed (e.g., community leaders, local politicians) to facilitate minority-majority dialogue.

Clarity and precision remained essential in discussions of self-determination as an actionable principle of sociopolitical organization and international law, particularly about practical details for self-determination operations as well as different kinds and categories of self-determination. Other questions included: what qualifies a group to be/become a "people"? Do all peoples have the right of self-determination? How can ethnic nationalism be avoided in making this decision? How can criminal elements be excluded from claims to self-determination?

Some participants pointed out that the economy also had to be taken into account when answering some of these questions about self-determination. The alternative demands of groups often went hand in hand with economic marginalization. A participant noted that the setup of the economy, namely, the "ethno-economy", was a major factor in the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The way forward: specific recommendations and next steps

Looking ahead, participants agreed that the discussion in Triesenberg could mark the beginning of renewed efforts to grapple with the concept of self-determination and its implications for European and international peace and security. They also underlined the importance and value of bringing together experts and representatives from the diplomatic, academic and policymaking realms, who all contributed to a spirited debate.

The lack of process and properly equipped institutions to deal peacefully with self-determination claims, the lack of political consensus and the lack of data about various situations were pointed out as deficiencies in the current global system. Therefore, it was suggested that the time was right to expand the discussions beyond academic circles and theoretical debates in order to pursue practical applications of self-determination principles in various situations worldwide.

Several conditions for achieving this goal were considered: first, the persistent controversies surrounding the concept of self-determination had to be addressed head-on. This primarily entailed discounting the commonly accepted idea that giving more rights to people correlated with the dissolution of the State. Second, engaging various stakeholders at/around the United Nations and OSCE could create new political dynamics and help to raise the prominence of the concept. Participants observed that serious debate about self-determination in the international arena had languished since the 1990s, either because it had not been a high-priority issue for many States or because it was considered highly controversial.

Opinions were, however, split about the geographic scope of the debates. Some advocated for discussing self-determination claims globally, considering that many contemporary self-determination claims occurred outside of Europe. Others expressed interest in primarily focusing on issues in Europe and its neighbourhood, since it was presumptuous to "tell the world how to do things", having not addressed properly all the self-determination challenges in Europe, in particular in the framework of OSCE.

Views also diverged about the best venue in which to advance these discussions. Some recommended utilizing existing tools and institutions, including international organizations such as the United Nations (e.g., by getting the self-determination item back on the agenda of the General Assembly), and regional organizations such as OSCE and the European Union. Others, however, advocated for a continued conversation about the principles in an informal, outside setting before aiming for more formalized discussions inside international organizations.

Concrete ideas and recommendations for moving forward included:

In a diplomatic context

- Organize a meeting at the United Nations with representatives of States, self-determination movements and civil society from across the globe with the goal of conceptualizing and drafting normative principles which outline general guidelines on how to evaluate self-determination claims.
- Organize an OSCE high-level meeting with the goal of confirming the Helsinki Act and formulating a new principle: an obligation for all European States to reconcile territorial integrity and self-determination.
- Work with mediators and various mediation support units in international and regional organizations to craft guidelines for mediation professionals about specifics of engagement in negotiation processes dealing with self-determination claims. In particular, focus on: identifying techniques for keeping the momentum and maintaining the engagement of parties in prolonged negotiations processes, finding ways to enable engagement of Governments with self-determination movements through third parties, cataloguing the stages and intensity of self-determination claims, navigating the inclusion of all segments of society including civil society and encouraging information-sharing and joint analysis among many groups offering mediation support and facilitation.
- Outline ways for practical application of the proposed Liechtenstein Convention, especially in situations marked by the lack of an amenable constitution following peace negotiations, weak rule of law and/or a lacking sense of national solidarity/community or willingness to accept decentralization based on legal standings.
- Encourage regional organizations, especially in Europe (i.e., OSCE), to draw on the existing treaties, recommendations (e.g., Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life) and mechanisms (e.g., Commissioner for Minorities, Council of Europe Framework) to mobilize these tools in order to address existing issues.

In an academic context

- Invest in surveys and polls about the views of local populations in territories with self-determination aspirations, especially those affected by violence, in an attempt to amplify their voice in the settlement negotiations.
- Bring together a group of international lawyers and experts to look into the conceptual contradictions between territorial integrity and self-determination, given that territorial integrity has typically been given priority in discussions.
- Produce a handbook outlining best practices from past peace negotiations involving self-determination claims. Focus in particular on issues recurring in different situations, such as: division of governance competencies, fiscal organization, rights of minorities and cross-border integration. This would assist mediators, officials from international organizations, State officials and even self-determination movements.
- Examine the concept of self-determination in discussions through various lenses, including gender, the Internet and technology (i.e., "virtual self-determination"), multigenerational views and religion, in order to gain new insights into the concept's meaning and application.
- Sponsor a course about self-determination in order to familiarize the next generation with the concept. Such an initiative could capitalize on the location of the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The course should be co-taught by policy practitioners and academics to expand the debate beyond academia.
- Further explore the idea and definition of "people(s)" in theory and practice through seminars, with a view to clarifying these parameters in international law.
- Initiate discussions about the situation of displaced persons and refugees in situations involving self-determination claims, in particular return, compensation and relocation.

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Seventieth session
Agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict: prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 16 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Since my country was mentioned in your remarks made at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on 16 June 2016 as well as during your meetings with Russian high-level officials, I would like to draw your attention to the following facts.

It is the Russian Federation that unleashed hybrid war against Ukraine by the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and further military aggression in Donbas. These violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law were condemned by the whole international community. The General Assembly, in its resolution 68/262, has underscored that the so-called referendum in Crimea has no validity and cannot form the basis for any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

It is the Russian Federation that continues to trigger the military activities in Donbas by supplying weapons, military forces and ammunition. These facts were confirmed by many international organizations, including the United Nations. According to the latest report on the human rights situation in Ukraine of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "the conflict broke out in spring 2014 with the influx of foreign fighters, including citizens of the Russian Federation, ammunition and heavy weaponry into east Ukraine from across the border with the Russian Federation".

It is the Russian Federation that is continuously opposing the request of Ukraine to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Ukraine as well as the implementation of your noble idea of establishing a United Nations support office in Ukraine.

It is the Russian Federation that, according to the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, violates human rights in Crimea by illegal arrests, "the imposition of a new legal framework restrictive of civil liberties, abductions and disappearances, the shutting down of opposition media outlets and the silencing of dissenting voices through the initiation of

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repressive measures, including abusive criminal proceedings, targeting mainly pro-Ukrainian activists and Crimean Tatar institutions".

Finally, it is the Russian Federation that, by violation of the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed in Budapest on 5 December 1994, and by violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, undermined the non-proliferation process in the whole world, as you yourself once noted. Moreover, it unilaterally denounced the agreement with Ukraine on the status and conditions of deployment of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine of 28 May 1997 with a possible view to renewing, at this flourishing seaside resort, two base complexes for nuclear-weapon maintenance, which constitutes a serious challenge to the existing non-proliferation regime and must be tackled by the international community. We have also received evidence that the Russian Federation has deployed means of delivery of nuclear weapons and has been renovating relevant infrastructure on Ukrainian soil in Crimea.

Taking all this into account, we call upon you to take into consideration official United Nations documents, as well as continuous aggressive actions by the Russian Federation in Ukraine that caused more than 10,000 deaths and more than 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine, while evaluating the role of the Russian Federation in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and human rights protection.

We cannot accept your public praising of the "role of the Russian Federation in ending conflict in Ukraine" and would appreciate clarification of such a position.

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 16 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of remarks made on 15 June 2016 by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with regard to the United States' provocative "precision air raid operation" plan against the DPRK (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ja Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Remarks made by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Pyongyang, 15 June 15 (KCNA) — We will further bolster, in quality and quantity, nuclear deterrence for self-defence in the face of US reckless war moves and will thoroughly foil the slightest military provocation of the enemies with the Korean-style mode of merciless counteraction.

A spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK said the following on 15 June in answer to a question raised by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) with regard to a plan for a "precision air raid operation" against the DPRK.

He noted:

A strategic information consulting company of the US recently worked on and made public a report entitled "Military counteraction to the nuclear issue of north Korea".

The five-chapter report envisages a "precision air raid operation" against nuclear and military facilities in the DPRK to disable its nuclear capabilities.

The report chose nuclear facilities in Nyongbyon, construction site of an atomic power plant, uranium mines and enrichment facilities, as targets of an air raid and envisions making a simultaneous precision air raid on strategic force ballistic missiles, air force bombers and submarine-making facilities in the DPRK to destroy them in one blow.

To this end, scores of B-2 nuclear strategic bombers and F-22 stealth fighters loaded with large underground penetration bombs are supposed to be mobilized, and several Ohio-class nuclear submarines and destroyers are to launch hundreds of Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The spokesperson said that the open discussion of a "precision air raid operation" against the DPRK in the US reveals its undisguised ambition for a war of aggression against the DPRK that has entered an extremely reckless phase.

The publication of the extremely provocative report on a precision air raid on the nuclear facilities and nuclear force of the DPRK is clear proof of the fact that the surprise pre-emptive attack and armed invasion against the DPRK are in the full-dress process of examination and preparation, as it is just an extension of the US administration's extreme sanctions and pressure on the DPRK and moves for a nuclear war against it, the spokesperson said, and went on:

What should not be overlooked is that the dangerous "war scenario" against the DPRK was made public with the US-south Korea joint military exercises coming up shortly, in August.

The gravity of the situation lies in that the US is about to fight a large-scale war to militarily stifle the DPRK, foreseeing that its "precision air raid operation" will inevitably spill over into an "all-out war".

The aggressive US war moves, which are becoming a reality on the Korean peninsula, clearly prove once again the validity and the inevitability of the line of the Workers' Party of Korea on simultaneously pushing forward economic construction and building nuclear force.